



Ongoingness: The End of a Diary

Sarah Manguso

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“**[Manguso] has written the memoir we didn’t realize we needed.**” *The New Yorker*

In *Ongoingness*, Sarah Manguso continues to define the contours of the contemporary essay. In it, she confronts a meticulous diary that she has kept for twenty-five years. “I wanted to end each day with a record of everything that had ever happened,” she explains. But this simple statement belies a terror that she might forget something, that she might miss something important. Maintaining that diary, now eight hundred thousand words, had become, until recently, a kind of spiritual practice.

Then Manguso became pregnant and had a child, and these two Copernican events generated an amnesia that put her into a different relationship with the need to document herself amid ongoing time.

Ongoingness is a spare, meditative work that stands in stark contrast to the volubility of the diary?it is a haunting account of mortality and impermanence, of how we struggle to find clarity in the chaos of time that rushes around and over and through us.

“Bold, elegant, and honest . . . *Ongoingness* reads variously as an addict’s testimony, a confession, a celebration, an elegy.” *The Paris Review*

“Manguso captures the central challenge of memory, of attentiveness to life . . . A spectacularly and unsummarizably rewarding read.” *Maria Popova, Brain Pickings*

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